



## Number of kids alone at border hits all-time high in March

By ELLIOT SPAGAT and AL-EXANDRA JAFFE  
Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The U.S. government picked up nearly 19,000 children traveling alone across the Mexican border in March, authorities said Thursday, the largest monthly number ever recorded and a major test for President Joe Biden as he reverses many of his predecessor's hardline immigration tactics. A complex mix of factors in the United States and Central America drove the increase. It has coincided with the Biden administration's decision to exempt unaccompanied children from pandemic-related powers to immediately expel most people from the country without giving them an opportunity to

seek asylum. Children are instead released to "sponsors" in the U.S., usually parents or close relatives, while being allowed to pursue their cases in heavily backlogged immigration courts. The Border Patrol encountered 18,663 unaccompanied children in March, well above previous highs of 11,475 in May 2019 and 10,620 in June 2014. The agency started publishing the numbers in 2009. Before then, adults made up the vast majority of those crossing the border. March's count was roughly double the number of unaccompanied children encountered by the Border Patrol in February and more than five times the number in March 2020.

Continued on next page



In this March 30, 2021, file photo, young minors lie inside a pod at the Donna Department of Homeland Security holding facility, the main detention center for unaccompanied children in the Rio Grande Valley run by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), in Donna, Texas.

Associated Press

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**In this March 30, 2021, file photo, young unaccompanied migrants, from ages 3 to 9, watch television inside a playpen at the U.S. Customs and Border Protection facility, the main detention center for unaccompanied children in the Rio Grande Valley, in Donna, Texas.**

**Associated Press**

#### **Continued from Front**

The huge increase in children traveling alone — some as young as 3 — and families has severely strained border holding facilities, which aren't allowed to hold people for more than three days but often do. It's left the government scrambling to find space and hire staff to care for children longer term until they can be placed with sponsors.

For many, a hurricane that hit Central America in November added urgency to endemic poverty and violence that have led people to flee for decades. Changes in U.S. policy under Biden also have guided their decisions, whether real or rumored.

Hermelindo Ak, a Guatemalan corn grower who barely makes enough to feed his family, was ex-

pelled to Mexico from Texas' Rio Grande Valley with his 17-year-old son. Ak decided to send his son alone for a second attempt after learning unaccompanied children can stay in the U.S. Ak, 40, said he would return to family in Guatemala after selling his house to pay smugglers. The plan was for his oldest son to live with relatives in the U.S.

"I didn't want to leave him alone," Ak said last week in the Mexican border city of Reynosa. "Necessity obligates us."

Amid the growing numbers, more than 4,000 people at a U.S. Customs and Border Protection holding facility have been jammed into a space designed for 250 at a tent complex in Donna, Texas. They lay inches apart on mats on the floor with foil blankets.

CBP must transfer unac-

companied children within 72 hours to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, whose facilities are more suited to longer-term care while arrangements are made to release them. More than 2,000 children were held longer than that at the Donna facility one day last week, with 39 there at least 15 days.

HHS opened its first temporary holding facility in Carrizo Springs, Texas, on Feb. 22, and has since struck a slew of agreements to occupy large venues near the border, including convention centers in Dallas and San Diego, a stadium in San Antonio and Fort Bliss army base in El Paso, Texas. The department also has been paying for flights for children and sponsors to limit time in government custody. Overall, the Border Patrol had 168,195 encounters with

migrants on the southern border in March, its busiest month since March 2001, when it counted 170,580 arrests. The numbers aren't entirely comparable because more than half of last month's encounters resulted in expulsions under pandemic-related authority instituted by former President Donald Trump and kept in place by Biden.

People who are expelled are far more likely to try again because they face no legal consequences.

Unlike expulsions, people arrested under immigration laws can face jail time, felony prosecution for repeat offenses and bans on entering the country legally through marriage or other means. Biden administration officials said 28% of expulsions in March were people who had been expelled before, compared

with a 7% pre-pandemic recidivism rate for the 12-month period that ended in September 2019.

The Border Patrol had 52,904 encounters with people arriving as families, with only about one in three being expelled and the rest allowed to stay in the U.S. to pursue asylum.

Mexico's refusal to accept Central American families with children 6 and under because of a new law against detaining migrant families has limited the effectiveness of expulsions, administration officials said. Mexico is especially reluctant to accept families with young children in Tamaulipas state bordering the Rio Grande Valley, the busiest corridor for illegal crossings. The means hundreds of migrants go to bus stations in Texas border towns like McAllen and Brownsville on their way to their final destinations in the U.S. To save time, the Border Patrol last month began releasing migrant families — about 9,600 people as of Tuesday, according to U.S. Rep. Henry Cuellar — without notices to appear in court, instead directing them to report to a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement office in 60 days.

Numbers grew sharply during Trump's final year in office but further accelerated under Biden, who quickly ended many of his predecessor's policies, including one that made asylum-seekers wait in Mexico for court hearings in the U.S.

Mexicans represented the largest proportion of people encountered by the U.S. Border Patrol, and nearly all were single adults. Arrivals of people from Honduras and Guatemala were second and third, respectively, and more than half of the people from those countries were families or children traveling alone. □



# Industry foe charged under Iowa's new food trespassing law

By RYAN J. FOLEY  
Associated Press

**IOWA CITY, Iowa (AP)** — An animal rights activist whose investigations and pranks have made him a leading foe of the livestock industry has been charged with trespassing at a pig facility, in the first case brought under Iowa's latest law aimed at protecting farming operations from intruders. Matthew Johnson, 35, is charged with trespassing at a food operation for his presence Feb. 5 outside an Iowa Select Farms sow operation in Dows, 75 miles (120 kilometers) north of Des Moines.

Investigators say surveillance video captured Johnson approach one of the buildings and try to pull a door to determine if it was locked before running away. Iowa Select Farms, one of the nation's largest pork producers, turned over the footage to the Wright County sheriff's office, and Johnson was charged last month.

Under the so-called ag-gag law signed by Republican Gov. Kim Reynolds in June, trespassing at a food operation is an aggravated misdemeanor that carries up to two years in prison and a \$8,540 fine. A second offense is a felony that carries up to five years behind

bars. Those are far harsher penalties than trespassing elsewhere, a simple misdemeanor that carries up to 30 days in jail and a \$855 fine.

Johnson said Thursday that he was at the site filming videos for social media and trying to check on animals that "are living lives of horrific suffering" but that he never went inside any building. Separately, he is awaiting trial on burglary and electronic eavesdropping charges for allegedly entering the same facility on May 25, 2020, leaving recording equipment and taking a piglet that he said he rescued from slaughter. Lawmakers say they increased the penalties for trespassing at livestock operations to protect farmers from harassment and deter intrusions that threaten the safety of the state's multibillion-dollar agriculture industry.

Bill sponsor and Republican state Sen. Ken Rozenboom said Johnson and other activists have trespassed at his hog facilities four times.

"Every time he and his henchmen do that, they violate biosecurity protocols that are necessary to keep our food supply safe. And we simply can't tolerate that kind of reckless, and I would say evil, intent,"



In this February 2021 photo provided by Matt Johnson is animal rights activist Johnson, a researcher with the group Direct Action Everywhere.

Associated Press

he said.

But Johnson said activists follow biosecurity measures that are greater than the industry standard. He and other critics say the law targets undercover investigations that expose poor conditions for animals and turn public opinion against the meat industry.

Two previous Iowa laws that targeted undercover livestock investigations, passed in 2012 and 2019, have been put on hold amid legal challenges. The

8th Circuit Court of Appeals is expected to rule soon on a federal judge's decision that the initial law was unconstitutional because it criminalized protected speech.

Meanwhile, Iowa lawmakers moved this week to target Johnson's tactics again by enhancing penalties for people who place surveillance equipment while trespassing and who take unauthorized samples from livestock for disease testing. The governor could soon

sign the bill into law.

Johnson, a researcher with the group Direct Action Everywhere, last year placed recording equipment at another Iowa Select Farms property and documented company workers using heat and steam to kill thousands of hogs in what he called a barbaric practice. The company defended the method, known as ventilation shutdown, as a veterinary-approved way to depopulate its farms after the COVID-19 pandemic slowed production at plants and left nowhere for the animals to go. But Iowa Select stopped using the practice shortly after Johnson's expose. Prosecutors dropped related charges against Johnson after the company said it did not want to testify at trial.

In December, Johnson posed as the CEO of Smithfield Foods during a live interview on Fox Business, warning that farms "can sometimes be petri dishes for new diseases" and pledging \$500 million annually to offset the environmental impact of the meat industry. Anchor Maria Bartiromo said on the air that she was "punked."

Johnson said that he will likely use the charge to challenge the constitutionality of the new law. □

# Florida sues federal government to allow cruises to sail

By ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON  
MIAMI (AP)

— The state of Florida has filed a lawsuit against the federal government to demand cruise ships be allowed to start sailing immediately, Gov. Ron DeSantis announced Thursday.

DeSantis said the no-sail order is outdated and hurts the state as the industry generates billions for the economy and employs tens of thousands of Floridians.

"We don't believe the federal government has the right to mothball a major industry for over a year based on very little evidence and very little data," the Republican governor

said at a news conference at the Port of Miami.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued new guidelines last week for companies on how to respond in the event of COVID-19 cases but has so far not lifted its no-sail order.

The CDC shut down sailing last March when several coronavirus outbreaks were tied to ships worldwide, prompting ports to reject docking plans and leaving some passengers and crew members to navigate for an extended time. Florida is the nation's cruise capital with three of the world's busiest ports: Miami, Port Canaveral near Ken-

nedy Space Center, and Port Everglades near Fort Lauderdale. The industry generates billions for the state's economy as millions of people typically cruise from one of Florida's ports each year.

DeSantis has maintained the ban disproportionately impacts Florida and has said that cruising has resumed in much of the world, forcing Americans to fly to other ports in the nearby Bahamas. Industry leaders say there have been no new outbreaks tied to their ships.

"People are going to cruise one way or another. The question is are we going to do it out of Florida, which



Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, center, speaks during a news conference surrounded by officials and cruise workers, Thursday, April 8, 2021, at PortMiami in Miami.

Associated Press

is the number one place to do it in the world, or are they going to be doing

it out of the Bahamas or other locations?" DeSantis said. □



# Fight over Ghislaine Maxwell's jail conditions heats up

By **LARRY NEUMEISTER**

**Associated Press**

**NEW YORK (AP)** — The rancorous fight over jail conditions for Ghislaine Maxwell is reaching new lows, with prosecutors blaming the British socialite and Jeffrey Epstein's ex-girlfriend for creating a stink by failing to flush her toilet and her lawyer saying her health is declining in a facility so mucky that even her salad has mold in it.

The latest exchange in letters to a Manhattan federal court judge came this week as the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals scheduled oral arguments for late April on Maxwell's appeal of her thrice-rejected application to be freed on bail before her July 12 sex trafficking trial.

Maxwell has been at a Brooklyn federal jail since her July arrest on charges she recruited three teenage girls for Epstein to sexually abuse in the 1990s. Charges were recently expanded to allege the sex trafficking of girls for Epstein to abuse in the early 2000s. Maxwell has pleaded not guilty.

Attorney Bobbi Sternheim wrote in a letter late Wednesday that an effort



In this July 2, 2020 file photo, Audrey Strauss, Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, points to a photo of Jeffrey Epstein and his ex-girlfriend Ghislaine Maxwell.

**Associated Press**

by prosecutors "to publicly embarrass and humiliate Ms. Maxwell in the hostile court of public opinion further erodes the likelihood that her case will be tried by a fair and impartial jury." She says Maxwell has been mistreated, including over 1,400 physical searches and flashlight checks to ensure she's breathing every 15 minutes while she sleeps, as jail officials overreact to Epstein's August 2019 self-inflicted death in a Manhattan jail as he awaited

trial on sex charges.

The letter came a day after prosecutors got specific about Maxwell's jail conditions as they refuted claims Sternheim made in February that her 59-year-old client was "withering to a shell of her former self — losing weight, losing hair, and losing her ability to concentrate."

Sternheim had also alleged that Maxwell was physically abused when she was shoved into her cell by a guard prior to a pat-down

search and then was retaliated against for reporting it when she was ordered to clean, sanitize and scrub the walls of a shower.

In their letter, prosecutors said an investigation of the pat-down search complaint proved Maxwell's complaint unfounded.

They wrote that Maxwell was directed to clean her cell, not in retaliation, but because it had become "very dirty." They noted that Maxwell "frequently did not flush her toilet after using it, which caused the cell to smell."

Prosecutors said jail staff reported Maxwell, fully vaccinated against the coronavirus, to be physically healthy.

They said the jail's medical staff monitor the 5-foot-7 Maxwell daily and weigh her weekly, finding her weight fluctuates between the 130s and the 140s, normal for her height.

They said staff has not observed any noticeable hair loss.

In Wednesday's letter, Sternheim criticized the government, calling it "debatable whether the public has a 'right to know' about Ms. Maxwell's conditions of confinement." She said

prosecutors violated her client's privacy rights by releasing medical information related to weight and vaccination status.

"She is weighed while clothed on scales that are erratic and not set to zero," Sternheim said. "Her eyesight is failing, and her hair is thinning. The guards are far from qualified to assess Ms. Maxwell's physical condition."

As for Maxwell's toilet, Sternheim said her client avoids using it in a cell closely observed by video and guards but flushes it frequently, as directed by guards, to help alleviate a stench from overflowing toilets in the cellblock above.

"Blaming Ms. Maxwell for the filth of her severely restricted environment is utterly misplaced. To suggest she willingly lives in squalor is absurd," the lawyer said. Sternheim said the building where Maxwell is held is permeated with mold and vermin, and even a salad she was given earlier this week had mold in it.

"Cockroaches and rodents are plentiful and glue tracks have been placed in Ms. Maxwell's day area to help remediate the problem," she said. □

## Permits won't be needed to carry handguns in Tennessee



Rep. William Lamberth, R-Portland, left, waits to be called on to speak on behalf of his bill allowing most adults to carry handguns without obtaining a permit Monday, March 29, 2021, in Nashville, Tenn.

**Associated Press**

By **KIMBERLEE KRUESI**

**NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)** — Tennessee has become the latest state to soon allow most adults 21 and older to carry handguns without

first clearing a background check and training after Gov. Bill Lee on Thursday signed the measure into law.

"I signed constitutional carry

today because it shouldn't be hard for law-abiding Tennesseans to exercise their (Second Amendment) rights," said Lee, a Republican approaching his reelection campaign for 2022, in a tweet.

Lee initially proposed the National Rifle Association-backed legislation last year before the COVID-19 pandemic caused lawmakers to narrow their focus. He renewed that effort when lawmakers returned for this year's legislative session, where the GOP-controlled General Assembly easily advanced the measure to his desk.

The measure applies to firearms that are concealed and ones that are openly carried. It takes effect July 1.

Nationwide, at least six states are also weighing similar measures this year, with supporters eager to join nearly 20 others that currently don't require permits for concealed carry. Meanwhile, more than 30 states allow for permitless open carry.

Supporters of the bill argued that the proposal includes harsher penalties for those who commit certain gun-related crimes, with the governor setting aside \$17.7 million in his budget plan for the bill largely due to an anticipated increase in incarceration.

However, law enforcement groups — including police chiefs, sheriffs and prosecutors — have largely opposed the move and consider the state's existing

permit system an important safeguard for knowing who should or shouldn't be carrying a gun.

Asked whether recent mass shootings in Georgia, Colorado and others gave him any concern about timing, Lee has previously said the increased penalties mean that "we in fact will be strengthening laws that would help prevent gun crimes in the future."

The permitless carry law comes after Lee and Republican lawmakers relaxed the state's handgun law in 2019 by allowing people to obtain a concealed-carry-only handgun permit that didn't require them to demonstrate ability to fire a weapon. The new permits became available at the start of 2020. □



# N. Ireland leaders call for calm after violence escalates

By **PETER MORRISON** and  
**JILL LAWLESS**

**Associated Press**

**BELFAST, Northern Ireland**

**(AP)** — Authorities in Northern Ireland sought to restore calm Thursday after Protestant and Catholic youths in Belfast hurled bricks, fireworks and gasoline bombs at police and each other. It was the worst mayhem in a week of street violence in the region, where Britain's exit from the European Union has unsettled an uneasy political balance.

Crowds including children as young as 12 or 13 clashed across a concrete "peace wall" in west Belfast that separates a British loyalist Protestant neighborhood from an Irish nationalist Catholic area. Police fired rubber bullets at the crowd, and nearby a city bus was hijacked and set on fire.

Northern Ireland has seen sporadic outbreaks of street violence since the 1998 Good Friday peace accord ended "the Troubles" decades of Catholic-Protestant bloodshed over the status of the region in which more than 3,000 people died.

But Police Service of Northern Ireland Assistant Chief Constable Jonathan Roberts said Wednesday's



**A cyclist passes the remains of a burnt out bus on the Shankill road in West Belfast, Northern Ireland, Thursday, April 8, 2021.**

mayhem "was at a scale we have not seen in recent years." He said a total of 55 police officers had been injured over several nights of disorder and it was lucky no one had been seriously hurt or killed.

Britain's split from the EU has highlighted the contested status of Northern Ireland, where some people identify as British and want to stay part of the U.K., while others see themselves as Irish and seek unity with the neighboring Republic of

Ireland, an EU member. Unrest has erupted over the past week largely in loyalist, Protestant areas amid rising tensions over post-Brexit trade rules and worsening relations between the parties in the Protestant-Catholic power-sharing Belfast government.

U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson condemned the unrest, saying "the way to resolve differences is through dialogue, not violence or criminality." He sent Northern Ireland Sec-

retary Brandon Lewis to Belfast for talks with the region's political leaders. Meanwhile, Northern Ireland's Belfast-based assembly and government held emergency meetings Thursday and called for an end to the violence.

First Minister Arlene Foster, of the pro-British Democratic Unionist Party, warned that "Northern Ireland faces deep political challenges ahead."

"We should all know that when politics are per-

ceived to fail, those who fill the vacuum cause despair," said Foster, who heads the Northern Ireland government.

Deputy First Minister Michelle O'Neill, of Irish nationalist party Sinn Fein, called the violence "utterly deplorable."

Despite the united message, Northern Ireland's politicians are deeply divided, and events on the street are in many cases beyond their control.

As many predicted it would, the situation has been destabilized by Britain's departure from the EU after almost 50 years of membership that became final on Dec. 31. A post-Brexit U.K.-EU trade deal has imposed customs and border checks on some goods moving between Northern Ireland and the rest of the U.K. The arrangement was designed to avoid checks between Northern Ireland and Ireland because an open Irish border has helped underpin the peace process built.

But unionists says the new checks amount to the creation of a border between Northern Ireland and the rest of the U.K. something they fear undermines the region's place in the United Kingdom. □

**Associated Press**

## Dutch police detain man in plot to attack vaccination center

**THE HAGUE, Netherlands**  
**(AP)** — Police in the Netherlands have arrested a

37-year-old man on suspicion of plotting a crime with "terrorist intent" for

allegedly planning to set off what they described as a "firework bomb" at a coronavirus vaccination center, prosecutors said Thursday.

The man, whose identity was not released in line with Dutch privacy guidelines, was arrested March 18. He allegedly wanted to attack the former town hall in the northern port of Den Helder, 90 kilometers (55 miles) north of Amsterdam, which is being used as a vaccination center.

Prosecutors said the alleged plot is being treated as a terror act because it "aimed to instill serious fear among the population and to disrupt the economic and social struc-

tures of the country."

The suspect "sought to sabotage a crucial government process, the nationally coordinated vaccination program, in an extremely violent manner," the prosecution statement said.

"This also affects public health: The fewer people can be vaccinated, the more victims the virus will claim."

The suspect has been detained since his arrest as investigations continue into possible accomplices, prosecutors said.

Early last month, a blast caused by what police called a "homemade device" smashed windows at a coronavirus testing cen-

ter in a small Dutch town. Nobody was hurt in the explosion. In January, rioters torched a coronavirus test facility in the fishing village of Urk on the first night of a 9 p.m.-to-4:30 a.m. nationwide curfew imposed as part of the government's latest coronavirus lockdown.

The Netherlands remains in a months-long lockdown amid stubbornly high coronavirus infection numbers. Restaurants, bars, museums and other public places remain closed, although the government is experimenting with relaxing some restrictions for people who can prove they have been vaccinated or have tested negative for COVID-19. □



**In this Jan. 24, 2021, file photo, a police officer takes pictures of a burned-out coronavirus testing facility in the fishing village of Urk in the Netherlands after it was set on fire the night before by rioting youths protesting on the first night of a nationwide curfew.**

**Associated Press**

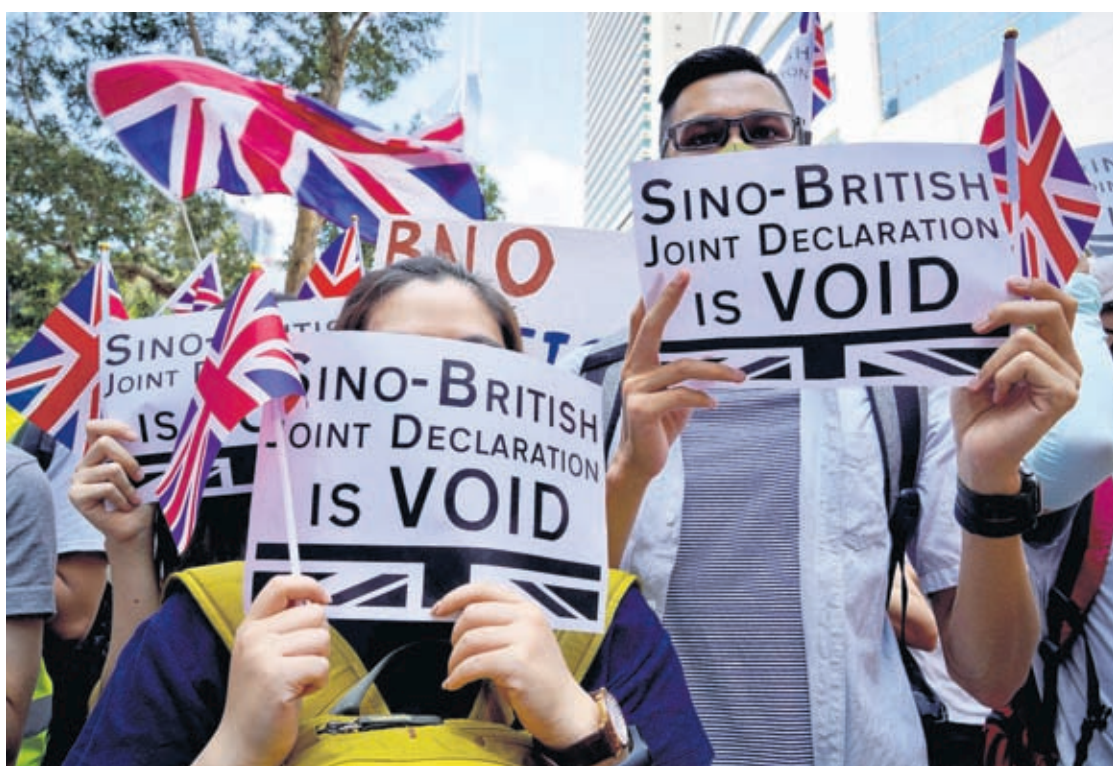


# U.K. offers \$59 million to help Hong Kong migrants settle down

**HONG KONG (AP)** — The British government said Thursday it is setting up a 43 million pound (\$59 million) fund to help migrants from Hong Kong settle in the country as they escape increasing political repression in the former colony. The offer extends to holders of British National (Overseas) passports who have been offered special visas, opening a path to work, residency and eventual citizenship to up to 5 million of Hong Kong's 7.4 million people.

The integration program will provide funding to help arrivals access housing, education and jobs. Around 10% of the funds will go toward establishing 12 "virtual welcome hubs" across Great Britain and Northern Ireland to "coordinate support and give practical advice and assistance," the British Consulate-General said. China has sharply criticized what it labels British abuse of the passports, saying it will no longer recognize them as travel documents or as a form of identification. Most residents also carry Hong Kong or other passports so it's not clear what effect that would have.

"The move delivers on the



In this Sunday, Sept. 15, 2019, file photo, protesters hold placards and wave British flags during a peaceful demonstration outside the British Consulate in Hong Kong.

Associated Press

U.K.'s historic and moral commitment to the people of Hong Kong who chose to retain their ties to the U.K. by taking up BN(O) status in 1997," the Consulate-General said in a statement, referring to the year Hong Kong was handed over to China.

"It provides them with a pathway to live in the U.K. should they choose to do so," the consulate said.

It said that Overseas Pass-

port holders have had their rights and freedoms restricted by the national security law imposed by Beijing, and "it is right that we change the entitlements in the U.K. which are attached to their status." China imposed the sweeping legislation on Hong Kong last year following massive anti-government protests in 2019, and the authorities have used it to virtually end political opposition and se-

verely restrict free speech. Changes to the electoral system have also closed off routes for political participation, with just 20 of the 90 members of the future Legislative Council to be directly elected. Beijing has also demanded that those running in elections must prove their loyalty to China and the Communist Party and threatens to prosecute anyone for statements regarded as unpatriotic,

whether issued in Hong Kong or abroad.

Most opposition figures have either been jailed, intimidated into silence or fled abroad. Political gatherings have been broken up by police and even art exhibitions have been criticized for promoting opposition views.

One prominent opposition figure, Nathan Law, was granted refugee status in the U.K.

"The fact that I am wanted under the National Security Law shows that I am exposed to severe political persecution and am unlikely to return to Hong Kong without risk," Law tweeted. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian lashed out at the British decision, calling Law a criminal suspect wanted by the Hong Kong police.

"We resolutely oppose any country, organization or individual harboring criminal elements in any way," Zhao told reporters at a daily briefing. "This is gross interference in Hong Kong justice, a violation of international law and the basic principles of international relations, and also goes against the consistent British principle of the rule of law." □

## Israel rejects ICC probe, saying it lacks jurisdiction

By **JOSEPH KRAUSS**  
Associated Press

**JERUSALEM (AP)** — Israel on Thursday said it would formally reject the International Criminal Court's decision to launch a probe into potential war crimes against the Palestinians, denying that it has committed such crimes and saying the court lacks the jurisdiction to investigate. A panel of judges at the ICC ruled in February that the court does have jurisdiction, allowing the investigation to proceed. Israel's response to a formal notification sent out last month is not expected to reopen that debate, though judges may reconsider the issue of jurisdiction later in the process.

The court is expected to look at possible war crimes committed by Israelis forces and Palestinian militants during and after the 2014 Gaza war, as well as Israel's establishment of set-

tlements in the occupied West Bank and annexed east Jerusalem that now house over 700,000 settlers. International law prohibits the transfer of civilians into occupied territory.



In this July 16, 2014 file photo, smoke rises after Israeli missile strikes hit the northern Gaza Strip.

Associated Press

The Palestinians have hailed the probe as a rare opportunity to hold Israel to account for what they say are serious, longstanding violations of international law. The Palestinians were granted nonmember observer status in the U.N. General Assembly in 2012, allowing them to join international organizations like the ICC.

Israel says the court is biased against it and has no right to investigate, citing its own judicial processes and the fact that the Palestinians have neither a state nor defined borders. "In addition to totally rejecting the claim that Israel commits war crimes, Israel reiterates its unequivocal position that the Hague

Tribunal has no authority to open an investigation against it," the government said in a statement, detailing a letter it plans to send to the ICC.

"Israel is committed to the rule of law and will continue to investigate any charges against it regardless of the source, and it expects the tribunal to refrain from violating its authority and sovereignty," the statement said.

The letter is in response to an official notice sent to all parties by the ICC last month. Israel could have argued that it was capable of investigating and prosecuting violations on its own, potentially deferring or even cancelling the ICC's investigation. □



# Poor rains bring optimism African locust outbreak will fade

By TOM ODULA  
Associated Press

**BARAKA, Kenya (AP)** — In a convoy of pickup trucks fitted with spray guns, soldiers zoom through Baraka's hills leaving a trail of dust and bemused villagers in its wake.

The vehicles brake when the soldiers see the enemy: billions of invading desert locusts that have landed in a twitching swarm where a forested area meets farmland.

The deployment of soldiers among the usual agriculture officials is a testament to the seriousness of the threat as East Africa's locust outbreak continues well into a second year. The young locusts arrive in waves from breeding grounds in Somalia, where insecurity hampers the response.

It's the beginning of the planting season in Kenya, but the delayed rains have brought a small amount of optimism in the fight against the locusts, though farmers still worry about their crops. The United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization says the locust swarms have been spotted in the Rift Valley — which pro-



**Stephen Mudoga, 12, the son of a farmer, chases away a swarm of locusts on his farm as he returns home from school, at Elburgon, in Nakuru county, Kenya Wednesday, March 17, 2021.**  
Associated Press

duces Kenya's staple foods of maize, wheat and potatoes.

But the FAO says that as a result of the poor rains in Kenya and neighboring Ethiopia, the swarms in both countries are remaining immature. Their numbers also continue to decline due to ongoing control operations.

Without rainfall, the swarms

will not breed, severely limiting the scale and extent of their threat, the FAO says in a recent update.

"For this reason, there is cautious optimism that the current upsurge is winding down in the Horn of Africa, especially if poor rains limit breeding this spring in northern Kenya and southern Ethiopia, followed by equally poor rains during

the summer in northeast Ethiopia."

Last year, authorities managed to contain what was seen as the biggest locust infestation in Kenya in 70 years, largely through coordinated aerial spraying which covered vast territories quickly. Many of those swarms were in uninhabited areas. This year the swarms have presented a differ-

ent challenge by landing in more inhabited areas. That means spraying is out of the question because it could adversely affect people and livestock, says Ambrose Nyatich, a livelihood recovery expert with the FAO.

So the delayed rains are a benefit — in part.

Desert locusts pose an unprecedented risk to agriculture-based livelihoods and food security in the already fragile Horn of Africa region amid economic crises, drought and conflict, FAO says.

A typical desert locust swarm can contain up to 150 million locusts per square kilometer, according to the East African regional body, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. "An average swarm can destroy as much food crops in a day as is sufficient to feed 2,500 people."

Farmers like Hannah Nyokabi in the community of Baraka — which means "blessing" in Swahili — find themselves in a difficult situation. Poor rains might lessen the locust threat but will almost certainly mean a poor harvest. □

## Mexico president justifies release of kingpin targeted by U.S.

**MEXICO CITY (AP)** — Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador on Wednesday defended the 2013 ruling that freed one of the drug lords most wanted by U.S. authorities, even though Mexico's Supreme Court later ruled it was a mistake.

Rafael Caro Quintero walked free while serving a 40-year sentence for the torture-murder of U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration agent Enrique "Kiki" Camarena in 1985, and has since apparently resumed his role as violent drug trafficker.

Caro Quintero is at the top of the DEA's Most Wanted list, with a \$20 million reward for his capture.

López Obrador said Wednesday the legal appeal that led to Caro Quin-

tero's release was "justified" because supposedly no verdict had been handed down against the drug lord after 27 years in jail. López Obrador also depicted a later warrant for his re-arrest as an example of U.S. pressure.

"Once he was out, they had to look for him again, because the United States demanded he shouldn't have been released, but legally the appeal was justified," López Obrador said. Presidential spokesman Jesús Ramírez said "the president was just saying that it was a legal aberration that the judge had not issued a verdict on Mr. Caro Quintero after 27 years ... but he was not defending his release."

There was a verdict but a Mexican appeals court initially decided it had come

from the wrong judge. In August 2013, the appeals court overturned Caro Quintero's 40-year sentence in the killing of Camarena and a Mexican government pilot. The panel argued a state court should have overseen the case, not a federal one, and ordered his immediate release from a maximum-security prison.

Mexico's Supreme Court annulled the order releasing him months later, saying Camarena was a registered U.S. government agent and therefore his killing was a federal crime and had been properly tried. An arrest warrant was issued for Caro Quintero, who has been in hiding since his release.

His late-night release angered the U.S. government and surprised Mexican

prosecutors, who weren't notified until hours after it took place.

The issue is a thorny one for López Obrador, who has publicly stated that the Mexican government is no longer interested in de-

taining drug lords. In 2019, López Obrador ordered the release of Ovidio Guzmán, a son of imprisoned drug lord Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán, to avoid bloodshed. □



**In this image released by the FBI shows the wanted poster for Rafael Caro Quintero, who tortured and murdered U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration agent Enrique "Kiki" Camarena in 1985.**

Associated Press



## Harbour House Aruba: “80 % sold already, we are doing great”

**ORANJESTAD — Boosting a buyers confidence comes with a strong sales team, an established company name and experience. The Perret Group are the owners of among others Harbour House Aruba and they live up to the expectation. With 80 % of the condominiums sold in their residence they can do nothing more but be content. Take a look at this cool site reflecting best of two worlds: beach and city.**

The residence consists of 94 units in the former 7-level Marazul building at the historical location of Paardenbaai. Harbour

House Aruba is the ultimate smart investment or personal living space. Harbour House's sales manager explains why. “A state-of-the-art lobby, an ocean-view gym, bar service, rooftop with 360 degrees view of Oranjestad, on-site parking, 24-hours security and a top floor lounge area with Jacuzzi's. Cherry on the cake: an infinity pool.”

Harbour House Aruba offers cosmopolitan living in a beach-chic environment. The residence is fast-selling their studios, two-bedroom and three-bedroom units for many reasons but in a nutshell we can name: great location, great value for your



money and great quality. To see exactly what still is available you may check the website which shows you a map with sold and open units. Updates on construction are also on forehand. When you live abroad stopping by to check upon your purchase is not that simple, yet with the monthly updates on their website, it is a lot easier.

“There are only a few units left, now we are working on the amenities like the pool that is almost finished. We are installing the Jacuzzi area on top and we have all the exterior windows in so we are right on schedule, expecting to deliver in September,” the sales manager explains.

The process of purchase is easy, whether you are abroad or on the island. Make an appointment through the website to visit the sales office when you are here. In that way you can actually see the unit, materials and amenities. If you are not on the island the website can help you out and the sales office is happy to send you all needed documentation for you to orientate. “When agreed upon the unit you sign an agreement and move forward with the down payment which is \$ 30.000. At receipt of that amount the sales is closed and the price will not change. You know what

you get and will not be surprised by price changes. The payment agreements after the deposit will be discussed and are flexible. We assist also in financing by banks.”

The ground level of the building will provide a gallery of restaurants, art gallery, stores, and supermarket. “We get in more requests for renting and so far we have restaurant, salon, mini market, art gallery a craft beer factory which makes up for a great variation. A parking lot will be assigned to the owners and visitors.”

City elegance combined with tropical tranquility is what you get here. The panoramas are breathtaking. Can you imagine yourself with your favorite cup of joe, gazing out over the ocean while the city of Oranjestad is awakening? The new trend is to live tinier but comfy and Harbour House meets this market demand with the perfect product. Everything is close, you are centrally located, just a step away from the beach though right in the main area in Oranjestad. You have history to tell and you are within walking distance to all Oranjestad has to offer. What else do you need? ☐

For more information:  
<https://harbourhousearuba.com>





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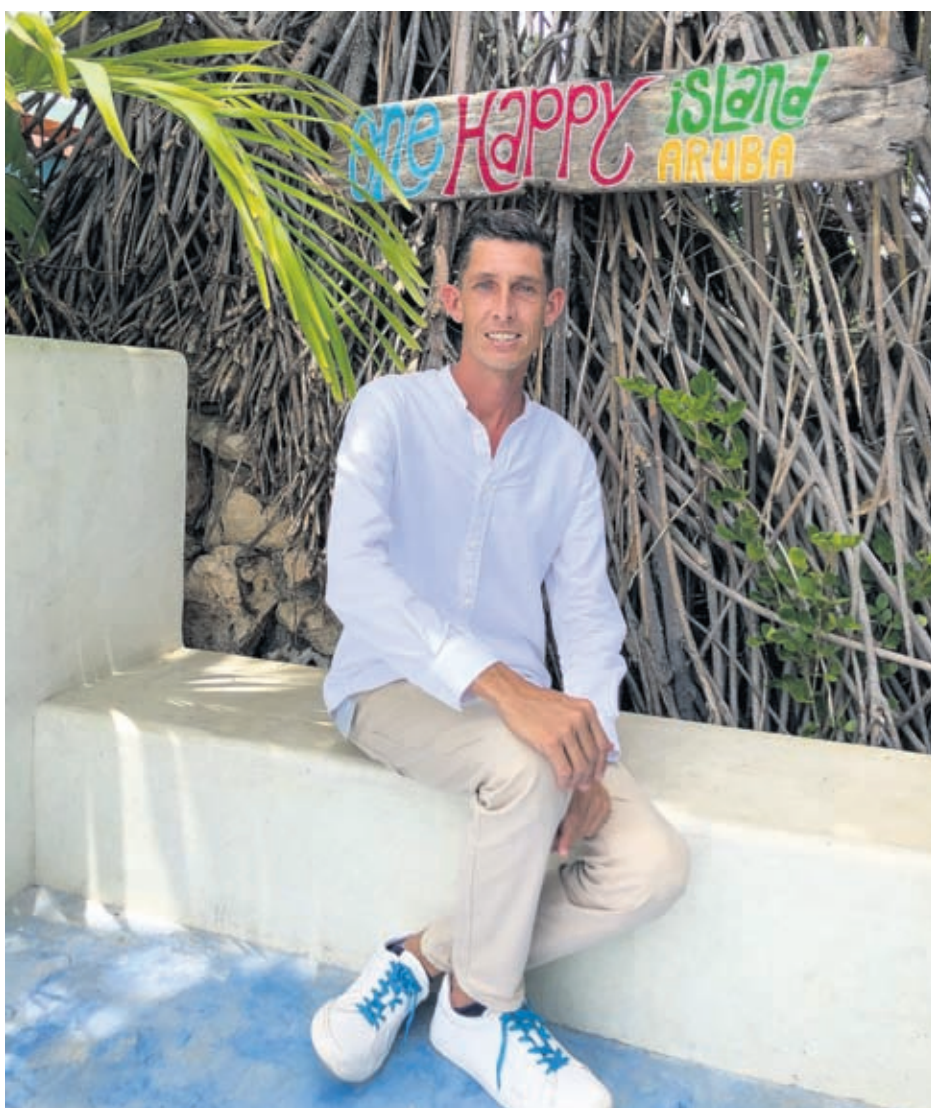
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Mickael Mesker Appointed Assistant Hotel Manager

**PALM BEACH** — Boardwalk Boutique Hotel Aruba announced that Mickael Mesker has been appointed Assistant Hotel Manager, effective March 1st. In his new role Mickael oversees the Front Desk operations, manages the Housekeeping & Maintenance staff and assists hotel owners Kimberly and Stephanie Rooijackers with the daily hotel operations. Previously Mickael was Executive Housekeeper at Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort and held various positions in the hospitality industry in Aruba, Curaçao and The Netherlands over the last 14 years.

Mickael is a former student of Colegio Arubano and holds a Bachelor Degree in Business Administration for IHM from the CHN University Leeuwarden. Mickael comes from a hospitality family and has been working in small family-run businesses since childhood.

"As a local, family-run small hotel, we see Mickael as the right addition to our tight knit group of workers at Boardwalk and we have all the confidence in his people skills and management knowhow to set an even higher bar for our cleanliness scores and overall hotel operations. We wish Mickael great success in his future endeavors within



the Boardwalk family", says hotel owner Kimberly Rooijackers.

Boardwalk Boutique Hotel Aruba is a locally owned and family-run hotel, consisting of 46 Caribbean-style casitas set in the lush gardens of a historic coconut plantation. Guests have access to a spacious lobby with Concierge services, two pools, a gym with spa and yoga facilities, a dedicated beach area on Palm Beach, and f&b services provided

by Eduardo's Beach Shack. Boardwalk is consistently ranked the #2 best hotel in Aruba and holds a Gold Certificate from TravelLife for its sustainable hotel operations. More on [boardwalkaruba.com](http://boardwalkaruba.com). □

**Boardwalk Boutique Hotel Aruba**  
Bakval 20, Palm Beach  
+297 586 6654  
[reservations@boardwalkaruba.com](mailto:reservations@boardwalkaruba.com)  
[www.boardwalkaruba.com](http://www.boardwalkaruba.com)

## Aruba to me

**ORANJESTAD** — You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is ..... Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: [news@arubatoday.com](mailto:news@arubatoday.com) and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again. □



## Covid-19: the status on Aruba

**ORANJESTAD** — Rules and protocols are being reviewed and evaluated on a daily basis and adapted as per current situation by a crisis team, in order to protect each and every one visiting and inhabiting our island.

There are currently 599 active Covid cases on the island. 533 residents and 66 non-residents. There are 32 persons hospitalized of which 13 of them are in the Intensive care unit. 82 persons lost their battle against the Covid virus. A total of 132.894 persons have been tested of which 87.194 were tested at the airport. 92 persons lost the battle against Covid-19. A total of 40.194 persons registered for the vaccine of which 33.493 already received the first dosage of Pfizer vaccine and 10.946 of them received the second dosage too.

### Measurement by the Government of Aruba

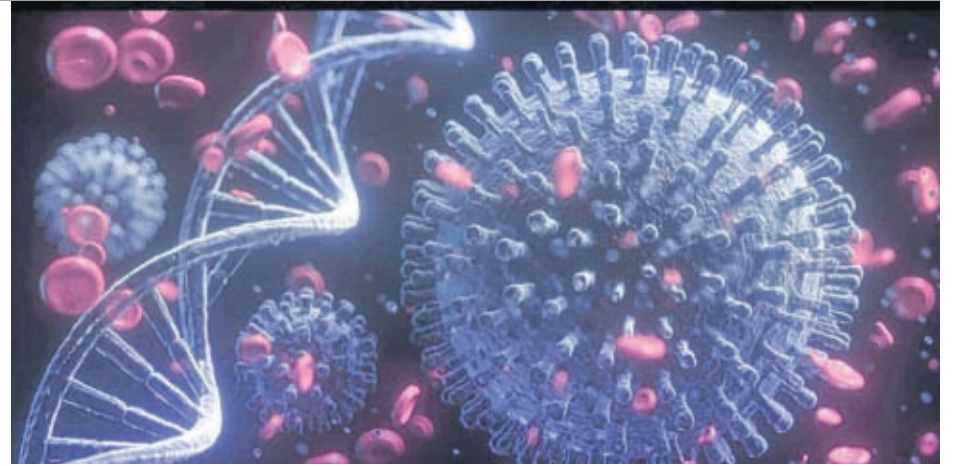
- Curfew is from 10am to 5am.
- Closing time for businesses is

9pm.

- Max two (2) per table (indoors & outdoors) (excluding children under the age of 12) Tables must be at least 1.5 meters apart.
- Only 1 musician is allowed to perform on stage.
- No musical events that are intended to attract customers.
- Background music is allowed/ No dancing.
- Hotels and lodgings are exempted from the closing time, BUT only to serve their registered guests between 9pm and 5am.
- Casinos are not part of the exemption and must close at 9pm.

### Important notice:

- Prior to travel, visitors should download the Aruba Department of Public Health's Aruba Health App: A mobile resource for information on COVID-19 health procedures in Aruba, facilitation of the airport health



screening, and faster results for Molecular PCR COVID-19 tests taken in Aruba.

- A flat premium fee of \$30 is applicable for new insurance policies for travelers over 14 years old.
- Effective January 26th, 2021, as announced by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the U.S. government requires all international airline passengers to show proof of a negative, PCR or Antigen, Covid-19 test before boarding flights to the United States.

### Testing facilities in Aruba:

- MedCare Clinic: [www.medcare.aw](http://www.medcare.aw) - (+297) 280-0630 - Whatsapp (+297) 562-4440 - [info@medcare.aw](mailto:info@medcare.aw)
- MedLab: [www.covidaruba.com](http://www.covidaruba.com) (+297) 586-1600 - Cell/ Whatsapp (+297) 597-5544 - [info@lab.aw](mailto:info@lab.aw)
- Horacio Oduber Hospital <https://www.arubahospital.com/> - [servicecenter@hoharuba.com](mailto:servicecenter@hoharuba.com) (+297) 597-4522 (Call or WhatsApp)

More information on travel and health requirements can be found on [www.aruba.com](http://www.aruba.com). □

## Foundation Turtugaruba: Sea turtle nesting season is underway



**ORANJESTAD** — Turtugaruba was founded on September 3rd, 2003 by a group of enthusiastic volunteers. Ten years earlier, in 1993, a Sea Turtle Recovery Action Plan (STRAP) was introduced in Aruba and the rest of the Caribbean as an initiative of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). Tom Barmes, who was working at DLVV (Department of Agriculture, Husbandry and Fishery) was one of the writers of the STRAP for Aruba, together with Karen Eckert, director of WIDECAST (Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network). This is how sea turtle conservation started on the island following a plan that is still complied with today.

Tom formed a group of volunteers around him, because nature does not know office hours, like an organization such as DLVV. This group of volunteers used the name Widecast Aruba and today there are still a few of them active. They first started protecting the Leatherback Sea Turtle nests on Palm Beach and Eagle Beach. This group also investigated which other species of sea turtles use Aruba as their nesting habitat and which beaches are used by them. For a period of 25 years a study has been conducted in which every early morning the beach was being monitored in which now there is a good overview of sea turtle nesting activities.

**There are 4 different sea turtle species that visit Aruba to lay their eggs, each with their own specific season:**

- Leatherback Sea Turtle – Lederschildpad – Driekiel (March – September)
- Loggerhead Sea Turtle – Dikkopschildpad – Cawama (May – September)
- Hawksbill Sea Turtle – Karetschildpad – Caret (June – December)
- Green Turtle – Soepschildpad – Turtuga Blanco (July-November)

Sea turtles play a vital role in keeping our oceans healthy. The Green Turtle, for example, keeps the sea grasses on the bottom of the sea short and therefore a healthy place for many fish to deposit their eggs. The Leatherback, the largest turtle of the world, eats mainly jellyfish and helps maintain the balance between jellyfish and plankton. Despite the threats that exist on Aruba, the turtles still keep coming.

### What you can do to protect the sea turtles

- Lights out for sea turtles.
- Do not drive on beaches.
- Do not litter. Do not leave any plastic cups, straws or bags on the beach.
- Remove obstacles from the beach.
- Do not disturb a nesting sea turtle.
- Do not attempt to touch the turtle but stay at a respectful distance (at least 10 meters).
- Do not take a turtle out of the water
- Do not feed the turtles
- Do call Turtugaruba (24 hour Turtle Hotline: (297) 592-9393).

### For more information, please contact Turtugaruba:

TURTLE-HOTLINE: + 297 5929393 E-mail: [turtugaruba@hotmail.com](mailto:turtugaruba@hotmail.com) Facebook. □





# Pandemic impact may weigh on commercial real estate recovery

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — The distribution of COVID-19 vaccines is fueling optimism that Americans will increasingly return to the ways they used to shop, travel and work before the pandemic.

That would be a welcome change for companies that own office buildings and hotels, or those that lease space to restaurants, bars, department stores and other retailers. These have been the hardest-hit areas of commercial real estate over the past year as the pandemic forced many businesses to shut down temporarily or operate on a limited basis.

But even as the U.S. economy appears set to roar back to life this year, as many economists now predict, demand trends for commercial real estate could take longer to recover as businesses reassess their post-pandemic needs.

This means higher vacancy rates and declining rents this year, especially for retail and office property owners, said Thomas LaSalvia, senior economist with Moody's Analytics.

"We see such potential and plenty of anecdotes and early data of actual shifts in how we work and how we shop," he said. "The structural changes that are go-



Signs advertise a business space for lease at a shopping plaza, Tuesday, Jan. 12, 2021, in Orlando, Fla.

ing on still give us pause to say that we've entered a recovery in terms of office or retail."

So far this year, the commercial real estate market has seen some positive trends, as many businesses that had to shut down or operate on a limited basis are being given the green light to open by governments amid a pullback in new coronavirus cases and a ramped-up rollout of vaccines.

In March, the national unemployment rate fell from 6.2% to 6% and employers

added 916,000 jobs, the most since August. That included 216,000 positions at restaurants, hotels and bars the sector most damaged by the pandemic.

And this week, the International Monetary Fund forecast that the U.S. economy will grow 6.4% this year. That would fastest annual pace since 1984 and the strongest among the world's wealthiest countries.

Still, commercial real estate owners face uncertainty as tenants reevaluate their needs. Will businesses that rented office space and

spent the last year with most or all of their employees working from home need as much space? Will retailers that shifted more of their operations online during the pandemic cut back on storefronts? Will businesses resume spending on travel after having embraced video conferencing?

The full impact of these assessments may not be known for a while, as commercial property leases tend to run between five and 15 years. Still, some of the economic fallout from

the pandemic is already visible in national commercial real estate industry data.

The vacancy rate for retail space increased to 10.6% in the first three months of this year from 10.2% a year earlier, according to Moody's Analytics.

And average effective rent, what's left after taking out concessions offered by landlords to woo tenants, dropped 1.5%.

Moody's Analytics is projecting vacancy rates for retail properties will climb to 11% or 12% as businesses reconsider their space needs after last year, when the percentage of retail purchases made online nearly doubled to 20%.

"We actually expect that to rise closer to 25% by 2025," LaSalvia said. "This pandemic forced a lot of people to pull the bandage off in terms of being willing and able to shop online."

For office space, vacancies rose to a rate of 18.2% in the first quarter from 17%, while average effective rent fell 1.8%, according to Moody's Analytics.

Before the pandemic, office vacancies had been trending around 15% to 16% nationally. LaSalvia expects that to climb to 20% by 2022, then decline gradually to 17% by the end of the decade. □

Associated Press

## GameStop nominates Chewy founder Ryan Cohen as chairman

By **ANNE D'INNOCENZIO**  
AP Retail Writer

**NEW YORK (AP)** — GameStop says it's nominating Chewy founder Ryan Cohen as chairman of the board at its annual shareholders' meeting on June 9. The current board chair is Kathy P. Vrabec.

In mid-January, GameStop Corp. added Cohen and two of his former colleagues from Chewy to its board after Cohen had pressed the retailer to focus on its online operations. That move contributed to the stock's meteoric

rise. Shares have given up some of their over-the-moon gains since the big runup in late January, but are still up more than 800% this year.

Earlier this week, the Grapevine, Texas-based video retailer said that it will sell up to 3.5 million of its shares. The shares will be sold through an "at-the-market" offering, which allows companies to place their stock on the market over a period of time.

GameStop's business has been floundering over the past decade with the

rapid shift toward downloading games. That shift threatened the existence of GameStop and its shares had been more than halved, to \$20 each, by the beginning of this year. But GameStop has been swept up in a battle between big-moneyed hedge funds betting against it and small investors trying to prop it up. That has caused GameStop's share price to soar despite the shaky financials underneath.

Other new directors up for election to the board at



In this Thursday, Jan. 28, 2021, file photo, a GameStop sign is seen above a store, in Urbandale, Iowa.

Associated Press

the shareholders' meeting are Yang Xu, senior vice president of global finance and treasury at Kraft Heinz Co. and Larry Cheng, who

was the first investor in Chewy.

Shares slipped 80 cents to trade at \$177.17 in midday trading Thursday. □



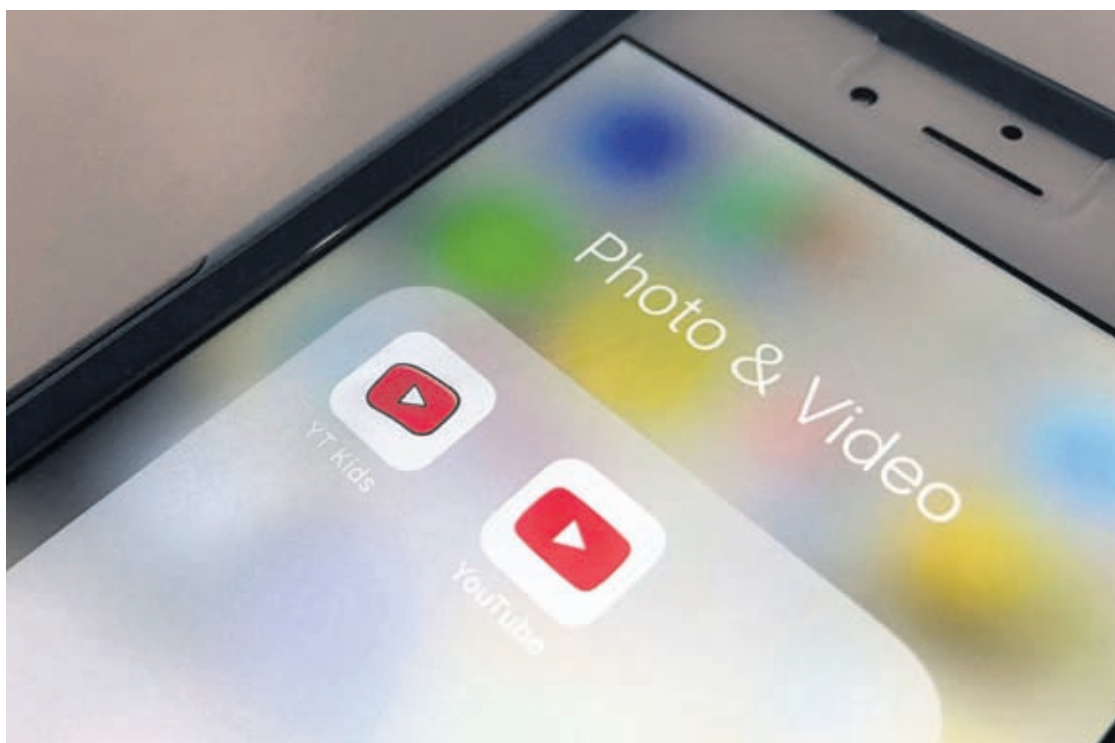
# Lawmakers call YouTube Kids a ‘wasteland of vapid’ content

By **BARBARA ORTUTAY**  
AP Technology Writer

A House subcommittee is investigating YouTube Kids, saying the Google-owned video service feeds children inappropriate material in “a wasteland of vapid, consumerist content” so it can serve them ads.

The inquiry comes despite Google agreeing to pay \$170 million in 2019 to settle allegations that YouTube collected personal data on children without their parents’ consent.

In a letter sent Tuesday to YouTube CEO Susan Wojcicki, the U.S. House Oversight and Reform subcommittee on economic and consumer policy said YouTube does not do enough to protect kids from material that could harm them. Instead it relies on artificial intelligence and creators’ self-regulation to decide what videos make it on to the platform, according to the letter from the committee’s chairman, Illinois Democrat Raja Krishnamoorthi. And despite changes in the wake of the 2019 set-



This April 25, 2018 file photo, the YouTube app and YouTube Kids app are displayed on an iPhone in New York.

tlement, the letter notes, YouTube Kids still shows ads to children. But instead of basing it on kids’ online activity, it now targets it based on the videos they are watching.

YouTube said it has sought to provide kids and families with protections and controls enabling them to view age-appropriate

content. It also emphasized that the 2019 settlement was over the regular YouTube platform, not the kids version.

“We’ve made significant investments in the YouTube Kids app to make it safer and to serve more educational and enriching content for kids, based on principles developed

with experts and parents,” the company said.

The congressional investigation comes a year into the pandemic that has shuttered schools and left parents who are working from home increasingly reliant on services such as YouTube to keep kids occupied. This has led to a rethinking of “screen time” rules and guilt over the amount of time kids spend in front of screens, with some experts recommending that parents focus on quality, not quantity.

But lawmakers say YouTube Kids is anything but quality. “YouTube Kids

spends no time or effort determining the appropriateness of content before it becomes available for children to watch,” the letter says. “YouTube Kids allows content creators to self-regulate. YouTube only asks that they consider factors including the subject matter of the video, whether the video has an emphasis on kids characters, themes, toys or games, and more.”

Kids under 13 are protected by a 1998 federal law that requires parental consent before companies can collect and share their personal information. Under the 2019 settlement, Google agreed to work with video creators to label material aimed at kids. It said it would limit data collection when users view such videos, regardless of their age.

But lawmakers say even after the settlement, YouTube Kids, which launched in 2015, continued to exploit loopholes and advertise to children.

While it does not target ads based on viewer interests the way the main YouTube service does, it tracks information about what kids are watching in order to recommend videos. It also collects personally identifying device information.

There are also other, sneaky ways ads are reaching children. □

Associated Press

## UPS explores eTVOLs, part helicopter and part plane

UPS is buying 10 electric vertical aircraft as it attempts to improve delivery times in small and mid-size markets.

eTVOLs are a cross between a helicopter and a fixed-wing airplane, meaning they can fly at higher speeds, as well as ascend and descend vertically.

In an announcement Wednesday, the Atlanta delivery company said it will test the eTVOLs for use in its Express Air delivery network. The program is been overseen by its Flight Forward division, which is also exploring drone delivery.

UPS expects to begin receiving the planes in 2024. There’s an option to buy up to 150 aircraft.

Financial terms of the deal were not disclosed.



In this Dec. 19, 2018 file photo, packages await delivery inside of a UPS truck in Baltimore.

Associated Press

The beta aircraft have a 1,400-pound cargo capacity, so they’ll be able to transport time-sensitive deliveries more quickly than if the packages were being delivered via small fixed-wing planes that require an airstrip.

The aircraft have a 250-

mile range and cruising speed of up to 170 miles per hour. It is hoped that the aircraft will allow UPS to plan a series of short routes, or one long route, on a single charge. The planes can charge in an hour or less and produce zero operational emissions. □

**Conceptis Sudoku**
By Dave Green

			6		9		3	
3	5						4	
				3	2			
4		8						9
		6				4		
9						1		6
			5	6				
	2						8	3
	8		3		1			

Difficulty Level ★★★★★
4/09

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# Classifieds

## Special Of The week

Divi Phoenix Villas  
Studio WK 16 and 17  
Room # 102 right on beach  
32 weeks remain \$9 K Both  
weeks  
DVC points contract (115,000)  
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johnnypaesch@gmail.com

## Special Of the Week

Aruba Divi Phoenix  
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32 weeks remain  
Maintenance fee paid (2022)  
Price :\$11 K all cost included  
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## Special Of the week

Dutch village  
Studio WK 10 Room #123  
16 Full accelerated weeks  
Expiration date :2026  
Price :\$4500  
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## Divi Village

2 BR WK # 13 Room # 3512  
C - Building Elevator  
Non Mandatory Expire :2036  
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## Divi Village

Studio WK # 13 Room # 6206  
Studio WK # 14 Room # 6205  
Ocean View 21 weeks remain  
Each  
Price : \$8000 each  
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## Divi Links Golf

1 BR WK # 12 and 13 Room  
#2160  
Ground Floor 33 and 34 weeks  
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## Looking To Buy

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2 BR , Garden View or Ocean  
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johnnypaesch@gmail.com

## For Sale

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Golf Course Ocean View  
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Price : \$450 K  
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## Le Vent Condo

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johnnypaesch@gmail.com

## Costa Linda Beach Resort

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\$1500 Call : (297) 630-1307  
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## Marriott Ocean Club

Platinum  
1 BR Ocean View \$10 K  
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## Costa Linda Beach Resort

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Call (297) 630-1307  
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

## Marriott Surf Club

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Gold Season  
2 BR Ocean View \$8 K  
2 BR Garden View \$6 K  
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## To All Time Share Owners

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Share  
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## Aruba Divi Phoenix

1 BR WK # 13 room #763  
27 weeks remain \$ 12,500  
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## Casa del Mar 2BR/2B

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Week 8/1113; 8/1409 (17k/Wk.);  
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Week 10/1207 (15k);  
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# The pandemic ruined one musical's debut plans. Not for long

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Huge waves couldn't stop Tori Murden McClure from becoming the first American to row across the Atlantic Ocean solo in 1999. So it's only fitting that a global pandemic couldn't stop a musical about her feat from making it to audiences — just not the way it was originally intended.

"Row," which was scheduled to make its stage debut at the Williamstown Theatre Festival in Massachusetts in the summer 2020, is instead making its world premiere this month as a recording available on Audible.

"This whole process has been like a slow blossoming," said Dawn Landes, who wrote the songs and lyrics. "It's really become a completely unique piece of art, which I never really could have even imagined."

When "Row" is released Thursday, it becomes a rare work — a world premiere musical that's never first had any sort of stage production. Without visuals, the team had to create space and time with audio cues.

"The amount of work and back and forth and technical things that you have to deal with to make a new musical in this medium is exponentially more than when you're in the room and can just try stuff," said book writer Daniel Goldstein.



**Rower Tori Murden, of Louisville, Ky., waves from her boat off North Carolina's Outer Banks, near Nags Head, N.C., on June 14, 1998.**

**Associated Press**

To complicate matters, all 10 actors and 9 musicians were never in the same room together due to COVID-19 restrictions. And none of the music had been recorded prior to lockdown. Never more than three actors were allowed at a time in Audible's Manhattan studio to record their parts and each was in isolation booths, listening to each other on headphones. An engineer, music director Mary-Mitchell Campbell and director Tyne Rafaeli were also on site.

The musicians — apart from a string quartet that had podded together during the pandemic — were remote and had their parts

mixed into the final product. Rehearsals were done by Zoom. Even the writers were remote.

"You couldn't dream this up: a show that's about isolation, having each person involved on the team being in actual isolation while working on it," said Landes. Because of the fear of virus transmission, the actors were given each day's script pages wrapped in plastic and weren't allowed to bring them back the next day. A car service ferried them home for lunch so they didn't have to go to a restaurant and risk infection.

"Row" is the festival's final offering this season and rep-

resents the first ever traditional book musical for the world's largest producer of audiobooks and spoken-word entertainment.

"We just sort of went into it in that spirit of like, 'Yeah, why not? We'll figure it out,'" said Kate Navin, executive producer at Theater Audible. "We're going to do more musicals. So I kind of figure they can only be easier from here on out."

When the pandemic threatened the festival's summer offerings, Williamstown Theatre Festival's Artistic Director Mandy Greenfield reached out to Navin with an ambitious request: Would they record their entire seven-show sea-

son — six plays and "Row"? Navin had already been mulling how Audible could fill the gap and agreed to push off into the unknown. "If you ossify, you die," said Greenfield. "It goes back to the story of 'Row' — it reminds you of the resilience and the singular power of the human spirit to persevere."

The musical frames rowing across the ocean as McClure's attempt to face — and defeat — helplessness. One of her brothers, Lamar, was learning-disabled, and Tori was his protector growing up, always defending him from bullies.

During her sea journey, McClure — played by Grace McLean — reads "Moby Dick" and quotes from F. Scott Fitzgerald and Aristotle. She communes with the spirit of Amelia Earhart and listeners learn of her life through flashbacks.

Other actors play Lamar, journalists and friends, as well as her husband-to-be, Mac McClure. There's even an appearance from the iconic Muhammad Ali, who inspired McClure. Throughout is the sound of water, seabirds and oars pulling through the ocean.

"Sound design becomes a much more important part of the story because we have to make sure we always understand when she's in the boat and when she's having flashbacks and memories that are filling in the story," said Navin. □

## Kemi Alabi wins First Book Award from poets academy



**This image released by the Academy of American Poets shows Kemi Alabi, recipient of the First Book Award from the Academy of American Poets.**

**Associated Press**

**NEW YORK (AP)** — A Chicago-based writer and activist has received the First Book Award from the Academy of American Poets. Kemi Alabi's "Against Heaven" is scheduled for publication in Spring 2022. Alabi, chosen for the honor by the acclaimed poet Claudia Rankine, will receive \$5,000 and a six-week, all-expenses-paid residency at the Civitella Ranieri Center in Umbria, Italy. The academy will also purchase and distribute thousands of copies of "Against Heaven."

Rankine said in a statement Thursday that "Against All Heaven" was a virtuosic and multi-layered exploration of "black queer subjectivity."

"At once sonic and disruptive, these poems pull together everything in a world where nothing is sacred," she said.

"In this energetic and brilliant debut, the thrust of the lyric dislodges all that is stuck and stagnant, creating new possibilities for utterance."

Alabi is cultural strategy director of Forward Together,

which helps communities combat marginalization based "on race, sexuality, and gender." Previous winners of the First Book Award, established in 1975, include Nicole Cooley and Jenny Xie. □

8	4	2	6	5	9	7	3	1
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1	6	7	4	3	2	8	9	5
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2	3	6	9	1	5	4	7	8
9	7	5	8	4	3	1	2	6
7	9	3	5	6	8	2	1	4
6	2	1	7	9	4	5	8	3
5	8	4	3	2	1	9	6	7

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

4/09



# Devils set sights on rebuilding in wake of departing talent

By JOHN WAWROW

**BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP)** — The harsh reality of the Devils being resigned to finish out the season with little to play for hit home for defenseman Damon Severson in the wake of New Jersey trading key forwards Kyle Palmieri and Travis Zajac to the New York Islanders.

"It obviously (stinks) the position that we're in in the standings and the way the season has gone," Severson said Thursday, a day after the trade was completed. "I think guys understand where we're at. We understand we're in a rebuild a little bit here. And hopefully we can speed that up."

Though the trade didn't come as a surprise, with Palmieri and Zajac both completing the final years of their contracts, the deal formally began shifting the Devils' focus toward the future beyond this season.

New Jersey acquired two draft picks, including the Islanders' first-round selection this year, as well as minor-league forwards A.J. Greer and Mason Jobst.

The move came in advance of the NHL's trad-



**New Jersey Devils goaltender Mackenzie Blackwood (29) and teammates Damon Severson (28) and P.K. Subban react after Washington Capitals' Carl Hagelin scored a goal during the third period of an NHL hockey game Sunday, April 4, 2021, in Newark, N.J. The Capitals won 5-4.**

Associated Press

ing deadline on Monday, and with the Devils sitting seventh in the East Division standings and 14 points out of contention with 19 games remaining before their game at Buffalo later in the day.

New Jersey is 0-2-2 in its past four with one win in its

past seven (1-4-2).

Zajac, a valuable two-way center, was in his 15th season with New Jersey, while Palmieri is an 11-year veteran and was completing his sixth season with the Devils. This, frustratingly, is an all-too familiar position for Severson to be in after hav-

ing previously watched the Devils sell off talent for assets.

Two years ago, the Devils dealt Marcus Johansson to Boston. Last year, Severson bid farewell to Taylor Hall, Wayne Simmonds, Andy Greene and Blake Coleman.

In his seventh season in New Jersey, Severson becomes the team's longest-active serving player during a stretch in which the Devils have made the playoffs just once, in 2018.

"It's definitely frustrating," Severson said. "I try not to show the frustration too much, but sometimes it definitely takes its toll. But I definitely want to be part of the solution to get this organization back to where it should be."

Palmieri and Zajac's departures created a large vacuum of veteran leadership, leaving the Devils relying on their core of youngsters, which include recently named captain Nico Hischier, Pavel Zacha, Jack Hughes and Ty Smith.

"It's never easy, big trades like that," said Hischier, who has resumed practicing but will miss his 22nd game with an upper-body injury.

"You've got to look forward, stick even more together," he added. "Not going to lie, those two players will be missed here. But I guess that's part of the business. We'll just try to go out there and do our best." □

## Native Americans: Move Boston Marathon from Oct. 11 holiday

By PHILIP MARCELO

Associated Press

**BOSTON (AP)** — Native Americans in Massachusetts are calling on the organizers of the Boston Marathon to move the already rescheduled date for the storied race because it now conflicts with a day meant to commemorate the contributions of Indigenous people.

The Boston Athletic Association announced in January that the 125th edition of the marathon would be pushed back from its traditional April running to Oct. 11, assuming road races are allowed to take place under Massachusetts' COVID-19 restrictions by then. But the Indigenous Peoples Day Committee in the Boston suburb of Newton complained the new day undercuts a day reserved for recognizing the contributions of Native Ameri-

cans, past and present. The group said its first planned celebration of the Oct. 11 holiday has to be canceled because of the marathon's new date.

"Unfortunately, the Boston Athletic Association has decided that Indigenous Peoples Day is a 'side' holiday that can be usurped," the committee said in a recently launched online petition. "By doing this, they are perpetuating the myth that Indigenous peoples are part of the past and irrelevant."

The BAA didn't directly address the complaints, but said Thursday that the new date was selected in close coordination with the eight cities and towns along the marathon route. Those communities include Newton as well as Hopkinton, Ashland, Framingham, Natick, Wellesley, Newton, Brookline and Boston.

"During the date selection process, the Boston Athletic Association regularly met with representatives from the eight cities and towns for feedback and guidance on potential dates and collaboratively selected Monday, October 11," the organization said in a statement. "We will continue working with city and town officials, as well as with organizations planning events during the October 9-11 weekend."

Newton Mayor Ruthanne Fuller and members of the city council didn't respond to emails seeking comment Thursday.

The Native American organization said marathon organizers should reschedule the race to give Indigenous communities the space they deserve.

"Indigenous Peoples Day is a time for everyone to learn more about the his-



**In this April 15, 2019, file photo, the elite women's division runners break from the start of the 123rd Boston Marathon in Hopkinton, Mass.**

Associated Press

tory of America as it relates to Indigenous Peoples — because we are all on Indigenous Land," the organization said in its petition. "The BAA has the chance to acknowledge the importance of keeping the spotlight on Indigenous Peoples Day rather than steal the

spotlight for the Marathon." The BAA has said this year's race will have space for 20,000 entrants — a smaller field than prior years to allow for social distancing. There will also be a virtual race from Oct. 8-10 that will allow up to 70,000 more entrants. □



# Payback for Elder, but he'll never be paid in full



**Gary Player, center, and Jack Nicklaus applaud as Lee Elder, left, waves before the ceremonial first tee shot at the Masters golf tournament on Thursday, April 8, 2021, in Augusta, Ga.**

Associated Press

**By PAUL NEWBERRY**  
**AP Sports Columnist**

**AUGUSTA, Ga. (AP)** — Lee Elder was 40 years old when he made history as the first Black player to tee it up at the Masters, after so many prime years had already been stolen from him by the scourge of racism. When Augusta National finally extended him the long-overdue honor of serving as an honorary starter, Elder's fragile, 86-year-old body wouldn't allow him to take even a single swing alongside Jack Nicklaus and Gary Player. Sitting in a chair at the first tee, an oxygen tube running beneath his nose, Elder listened intently to a glowing introduction by club chairman Fred Ridley before struggling to get his feet Thursday morning. Player reached over to help him up. Elder raised his driver to acknowledge the heartwarming cheers, bit his lip to hold back the tidal wave of emotions, then sat down. "I think that having Lee there was the right thing to do, a nice thing to do," Nicklaus said. Yet, it also was a sad reminder of how much the game of golf missed by excluding so many for so long. Many of their names came up again on the opening day of the Masters. Nicklaus recalled a Black caddie named Pon, who was on the bag for the Golden Bear's first Masters in

1959. "Pon, that's all I knew him by," Nicklaus said. Another Black caddie, Willie Peterson, was at Nicklaus' side for five of his six Masters titles, which came during an era when players were required to use a loopier who worked at the club. This was a group largely of African Americans who lived in the Augusta area. Many of them were pretty decent players in their own right but never got a chance to show what they could do on the course. Their skin was deemed the wrong color. So they settled for lugging the bags of white golfers. "The trouble that Willie got into — I don't know who it was matched by, but it was hard to match," Nicklaus said with a chuckle. "But Willie was a wonderful guy. I loved Willie, and I miss him." We can only imagine what Peterson and others would've brought to the game if allowed to realize their full potential. They loved golf. Too bad it didn't always love them back. The PGA had a Caucasian-only rule until 1961 — 14 years after Jackie Robinson broke baseball's color barrier. It took another 14 years before the Masters finally allowed a Black player, extending an invitation to Elder in 1975 after he won the Monsanto Open for his first tour victory.

Like most Black players of his era, Elder came up through the caddie ranks. He learned the finer points of the game by watching others swing. He took that knowledge to the course in his free time, honing his skills at public facilities that allowed Black golfers to play. "If you played around a lot of the places that I played, you had better be a good golfer, especially if you were trying to hustle a buck or two because there were so many bandits out there," Elder said. "I'm talking about guys that were real good players that always sat around and waited for somebody to come along. And when they found out that I was a pretty good player, all of them wanted to kind of be partners with me." After a stint in the Army, Elder joined the United Golf Association, a tour for Black players. He dominated that low-paying circuit, saved up his money and finally earned his PGA card in 1968. Elder won four times on the PGA Tour, competed in the four major championships (finishing as high as 11th in both the PGA Championship and U.S. Open), and became the first African American to earn a spot in the Ryder Cup. All along the way, he faced racist taunts and violent threats. But Elder and his fellow pioneers — players such as Charlie Sifford, who

broke the PGA tour's color line in 1961 — were more fortunate than many of their contemporaries. For those handful who made it, that were countless others who never got a chance. Player remembered a caddie named Ernest Nipper, who was at the South African's side when he made his Masters debut in 1957. "He was the best caddie I ever had," Player insisted. "He was a very good golfer. He lived here. He knew these greens inside out." Player can still recall the back-and-forth as they studied a 6-foot putt to save par at the fourth hole. "Nipper," Player said, "this is left lip." "Black Knight," the caddie countered, "this is on the right lip." When Player insisted again that he should aim at the left side of the cup, Nipper came back with, "If it's not on the right lip, you don't have to pay me." Player followed Nipper's advice. Nipper got paid. These days, even after Tiger Woods broke down so many racial barriers, golf remains largely white at its highest levels. There are just four players of Black heritage on the PGA Tour — and that list includes Woods, whose brilliant career is in jeopardy after a high-speed car crash left him with serious injuries. In the wake of protests that roiled the nation last summer, when tens of thousands demanded racial and social justice, Augusta National endowed two golf scholarships in Elder's name at nearby Paine College, a historically black college. The PGA Tour, meanwhile, has allowed a mini-tour composed largely of Black golfers to use courses in its TPC network for its events. Elder was joined at the first tee Thursday by representatives from Paine College, along with a group of Black PGA professionals. They got to see a bit of payback. But Elder — like so many others — will never be paid in full. □

